

## FAQ of the Month: How Do I Start Shooting F-Class?

F-Class rifle shooting is fired from the prone position at ranges from 300m to 900m. The goal is to hit a 1 Moa circle, which is 10 inch diameter, at 900m. Not an easy task but it can be done consistently by experienced shooters with good equipment.

F-Class is distinguished from traditional fullbore shooting (referred to as TR) by the use of a front bipod and a rear bag for support and an optical sight. In F-Class your primary opponent is the wind. There are two categories of F-Class: Restricted which requires the use of .308 Win or .223 Rem cartridges and F-Open where any cartridge may be used provided the caliber of the projectile is less than 8mm. F-TR rifles are limited to a maximum weight of 8.25kg. In this article I will focus on F-Class Restricted or F-TR because that is what I am familiar with.

A typical equipment list for a competitive F-TR shooter is provided in the table below. You will notice that the rifle is broken down into pieces rather than listing a particular make and model. This is because competitive shooters don't buy a rifle for F-TR. They build one out of the best components available from specialized manufacturers. The list is intimidating and pulling all this equipment together takes time.

But don't be discouraged! The table should represent an end goal for a competitive shooter rather than a starting point in the sport.

You can get started by borrowing a target rifle. Shooting a tuned rifle is a good way to see if you like the sport. The fullbore section of the RNBRA may be able to provide a rifle and ammunition to give you that chance. Just send an email to fullbore chair [Adam MacDonald](#) to enquire.

Another way to get started is by coming to one of our "Any Rifle" shoots where you can bring your hunting rifle and try it out to 600m. (See the [Fullbore Schedule](#).) Beyond 600m you will need a muzzle velocity higher than the average hunting rifle can provide. But 600m is a challenge and you can go through the motions of adjusting for elevation and windage. A typical hunting rifle with good factory ammunition will produce 3 moa groups at 600m.

If you want to purchase your own rifle then I recommend you find a good used rifle that has a proven record of accuracy and comes with a developed load. It will typically cost \$2000-\$3000 if the barrel is in good condition (1000 rounds or less). This does not count the scope or rings but probably includes the rail. If you are interested in purchasing a used F-TR rifle we may be able to put you in contact with someone looking to sell.

Another alternative is to buy one of the "target rifles" on the market but I don't recommend this approach. These rifles cost a minimum of \$2000 (no scope) and, although better than a hunting rifle, they are not precise enough to be competitive. The weakest elements of these rifles are the barrel and trigger. But the action also has its limitations. There is a good chance you will end up spending more bringing an out of the box target rifle up to snuff than you would spend on a good used rifle.

If you do purchase a commercial "target rifle" you should choose one with a V-block in the stock or have the stock "bedded" to support the action and replace the barrel that came with the gun with a good quality custom barrel (a new barrel is about \$600) straight away. Believe it or not that will save you time and money. Ammunition is \$1 a shot and it doesn't take long to spend more money trying to develop an accurate load than a barrel is worth.

I haven't mentioned ammunition because that is a story in itself. Suffice it to say that ammunition must be hand loaded to make you a competitive shooter in F-TR. I will save that for a later article.

Good Shooting

Gordon Holloway

Component	Notes
<b>Custom Barrel 28-32 inches long</b>	Rifling is cut and bore is lapped. It has 4-6 lands. The barrel must be chambered and precisely fit to your action by a gunsmith. Throat must be matched to the chosen projectile. Barrel is long to achieve the projectile velocity necessary for long range.
<b>Bolt Action</b>	Target actions are stiff and heavy. Typically have 3 or 4 lugs rather than the 2 lugs like a hunting rifle.
<b>Stock</b>	Must be fit to the action in a process called bedding to ensure consistent recoil.
<b>Trigger</b>	1 or 2 stage with last stage having a pull weight of 1 lb or less.
<b>Bipod</b>	Wider than a Harris style bipod for greater stability and as light as possible.
<b>Rear Bag</b>	Soft bunny ear bag made of leather and filled with sand.
<b>Scope</b>	Magnification of 25-50 X and tough enough to withstand thousands of recoil cycles. Must have target turrets for elevation and windage adjustments in 1/8 or 1/4 minutes of angle. Quality is important. Expect a minimum price of \$1400.
<b>Scope Rings</b>	Should be aluminum to save weight and match thermal expansion of scope tube.
<b>Scope Rail</b>	Joins the action to the scope rings and is generally aluminum.
<b>Shooting Mat</b>	Keeps you and your equipment clean and dry in the prone position.

(In addition to being RNBRA President, Gordon has been an active F-TR shooter for the past 5 years. In 2017 he competed in the New Brunswick Annual Prize Match, NS APM, PEI APM, Atlantic Championship, Mini-Palma, British Team Match, Inter-maritime Team Match, Eastern Canadian Championship, F-Class Nationals, and World F-Class Championship. That is a lot of bullets!)